

LOS ANGELES – For 31 days and 3,872 miles, an American flag was sent across the United States by over 6,000 volunteer runners who wanted to show their support to the families of the victims of September 11th, and to honor those men and women in uniform who are currently engaged in the new war against terrorism.

On Sunday morning, November 11th, that flag entered the 31st Congressional District of California. At 6:30 a.m., the American flag was passed to Representative Xavier Becerra who – joined by veterans, victim's family members, military officers, firefighters, police officers, friends and family – ran Leg 51 of the Flag Across America Run.

“I was overwhelmed with pride, and was honored to take part in such a terrific event,” Becerra said.

The run began on October 11, 2001, at Boston's Logan Airport where Massachusetts Governor Jane Swift handed over an American flag to a runner who began a remarkable journey. The goal: to reach Los Angeles International Airport by Veteran's Day, effectively completing the trip that United Flight 175 and American Airlines Flight 11 embarked on September 11th. This national event was billed as a symbolic effort to honor those who lost their lives on September 11th and to show support for those troops engaged in the new war on terrorism.

Sheila Ornedo, a resident of Eagle Rock whose husband was aboard one of the flights that crashed into the World Trade Center, also took part in the run with the congressman. “Too many people died senselessly when those planes crashed in New York and Washington,” Becerra said. “Remembering these amazing people will keep us forever vigilant in our effort to ensure that a tragedy like this one will never happen again.”

David Moffat, a lieutenant junior grade in the United States Navy who also ran with the

congressman, was honored to participate in Sunday's flag run. "I took great pride in being a part of a tremendous outpouring of patriotism towards this incredible nation," Moffat said. "I was further honored to be running along side an outstanding member of the House of Representatives who is a gracious and fine leader of the Los Angeles community."

Upon the completion of his leg of the journey, Rep. Becerra hosted a small Veteran's Day reception in Lincoln Park. The firefighters from Lincoln Heights Area Fire Station #1 joined the congressman as he spoke to numerous veterans, military officers, friends and family on the importance of Veteran's Day.

"I continue to be thankful for the work that our men and women in the armed services are doing here and overseas," Becerra said. " And just as much as we should be honoring our war heroes today, I feel Veteran's Day marks a perfect occasion to honor the men and women who serve our country as firefighters and police officers. They too are heroes who day after day put their lives in harm's way so that we might lead safer, more secure lives."

For more information on the Flag Run Across America, log onto www.flagrun.org .